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The Trickster Icon and Objectivism

Joseph Maurone

There is a character called the Trickster who plays a crucial role in much of the world's mythology and folklore. The Trickster has many incarnations; he is, in the words of Lewis Hyde, "the adept who can move between heaven and earth, and between the living and the dead . . . he is sometimes the messenger of the gods and sometimes the guide of souls, carrying the dead into the underworld or opening the tomb to release them when they must walk among us" (Hyde 1998, 6). The Trickster is usually found at boundaries or crossroads, sometimes navigating them, sometimes creating them. He is a mischievous troublemaker, simultaneously attempting to help and hinder. He is said to be both clever and a shameless fool. And he goes by many names, including Coyote and Wakdjunkaga in Native American stories, Loki in Norse mythology, Prometheus and Hermes in Greek mythology, Brer Rabbit in the folklore of the United States, Monkey in Asian stories, and Eshu, Thlokanyana, and Legba in African stories.

I would like to add Francisco d'Anconia, Kira Argounova, Howard Roark, Equality 7-2521, and John Galt to this list . . . and possibly Ayn Rand herself.

Who is the Trickster?

The easiest way to define the Trickster would be to take the name at face value. But that's just what the Trickster would want you to do. Anthropologist Paul Radin ([1956] 1972, xxiv) asks: "How shall we interpret this amazing figure? Are we dealing here with the

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workings of the mythopoeic imagination common to all mankind, which, at a certain period in man's history, gives us his picture of the world and of himself?" Because "[e]very generation occupies itself with interpreting Trickster anew" (168), there will always be a definitional problem. How can we provide a clear definition of an archetype that seems, by its very nature, to elude such clarity? Taking their lead from psychologist Carl Jung, Allan Combs and Mark Holland (1990, 121) suggest that the Trickster is an "archetype whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere."

Whereas such authors as Radin and Carl Kerenyi have written extensively on the presence of Trickster in Native American and Greek mythology, respectively, a more universal approach to defining the archetype can be found in Hyde's broad survey, *Trickster Makes This World.* By integrating the works of Radin, Kerenyi, Jung, and others with the rich oral tradition in Trickster folklore, Hyde locates the fundamental characteristic of the archetype—what Kerenyi ("The Trickster in Relation to Greek Mythology," in Radin [1956] 1972, 173–74) would call "an unchanging, indestructible core that not only antedates all the stories told about him, but has survived in spite of them." For Hyde, the Trickster is defined by his dual nature. Hyde (1998, 7) writes that "we constantly distinguish—right and wrong, sacred and profane, clean and dirty, male and female, young and old, living and dead—and in every case Trickster will cross the line and confuse the distinction." So when "the road between heaven and earth is not open," says Hyde, the "Trickster travels not as a messenger but as a thief, the one who steals from the gods the good things that humans need if they are to survive" (6).

Hyde explains the dialectics of the Trickster: "Boundary creation and crossing are related to one another, and the best way to describe trickster is to say simply that the boundary is where he will be found, sometimes drawing the line, sometimes crossing it, sometimes erasing or moving it, but always there, the god of the threshold, in all forms" (7). The task of both creating and blurring boundaries helps the Trickster to make apparent those distinctions that were "previously hidden from sight." Hyde observes further: "In several mythologies, the gods lived on earth until something trickster did caused them to

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rise into heaven. Trickster is thus the author of the great distance between heaven and earth; when he becomes the messenger of the gods, it's as if he has been enlisted to solve a problem that he himself created" (7). Thus, the Trickster often appears as an avenging angel. "When someone's sense of honorable behavior has left him unable to act," writes Hyde, "Trickster will appear to suggest an amoral action, something right/wrong that will get life going again. Trickster is the body of ambiguity and ambivalence, doubleness and duplicity, contradiction and paradox" (7).

Because he is on the boundaries, the Trickster is sometimes on the outside looking in. As an outsider, he is barred admittance. Hyde asks:

> What if you are an outsider? What if all the male scientists swap data and you happen to be a woman? What if students at your highschool always get scholarships to trade schools, never to elite universities? In cases such as these, you may have to resort to some form of subterfuge to get ahead; if others won't give, you may have to steal. (204)

This is exactly where the heroes of Ayn Rand's fiction may be found—on the threshold so to speak, as "outsiders" looking in, just as Stephen Cox (1999) has argued. And this is why many of Rand's characters exhibit the traits of the Trickster.

Rand's Characters as Tricksters

In his book, *The Ideas of Ayn Rand*, Ronald Merrill (1991) claims that "all of [Rand's] major works deal with the same theme: the able and moral person trapped in an evil and oppressive society." He then asks: "How is he to survive? How can he preserve his psychological health? How can he triumph?" (16). The icon of the Trickster seems to have suggested itself as a solution.

The Trickster archetype can be detected in Rand's earliest work, including her unpublished short stories (Rand 1984). Both characters in *Good Copy* exhibit Trickster behavior: the cub reporter fakes a

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kidnaping to create "good copy" for the news, but the tables are turned by the "victim," who blurs the boundary between the captive and the captor. In *Ideal*, actress Kay Gonda, who is portrayed as an icon of her day, starts a rumor that she has killed someone in order to test the loyalty of her fans. She wishes to see how her fans will react to the "ideal" that she embodies, once they have heard the rumor. In the end, most betray her or don't even recognize her.

Such themes are developed to a greater degree in Rand's published novels. In *We the Living*, for example, the prevailing ideology of Communism creates a context in which the characters face complex moral dilemmas. They are forced to lie, steal, and trade on black markets in order to survive. Kira Argounova, Rand's central protagonist, pretends to be in love with Andrei Taganov, an idealistic Communist agent, in order to get money, which she uses to save the life of her lover, Leo Kovalensky.[1]

It is the "airtight" environment of Soviet Russia that constitutes the boundary, providing a setting for the Trickster's appearance. As Chris Matthew Sciabarra ([1996] 1999, 9) observes: "Rand suggests that it is not Kira's dishonesty that has made this tragedy inevitable; it is the system that crushes 'the living' by sabotaging the possibility for human relationships." Merrill (1991) adds that "for Kira, there is, essentially, a single value: her love for the aristocratic Leo Kovalensky. Her attitude towards this value is very simple, and very characteristic of Rand: price no object" (34). It is a characteristic trait of the Trickster as well.

For example, that classic Trickster, Hermes, a god of Greek mythology, lied, cheated, and stole his way into the Greek pantheon when he was a baby. After stealing the cattle of the sun god Apollo, Hermes offers them to the gods as a sacrifice (audaciously offering one for himself as well). He defends his actions to his mother, Maia (who, curiously, is the daughter of Atlas):

> I'm ready to do whatever I must so that you and I will never go hungry. . . . Why should we be the only gods who never eat the fruits of sacrifice and prayer? Better always to live in the company of other deathless ones—rich, glamourous,

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> enjoying heaps of grain—than forever to sit by ourselves in a gloomy cavern. And as for my honor, my plan is to have a share of Apollo's power. If my father won't give it to me I intend to be—and I mean it—the Prince of Thieves. (Hyde 1998, 203)

Hermes the young is what Steve Eddy (2001, 78–79) calls "the omnipotent infant," who "celebrates the heroic aspect of the human spirit that is prepared to do battle against the odds and to challenge . . . restrictions."

Throughout Rand's fiction, her heroic characters play the role of thieves, when confronted with a society that closes the door to human potential. The twist here is that they don't steal from the gods; it is they who are being robbed. And so, in a novel such as *Atlas Shrugged*, it is they who attempt to right this wrong. Rand presents us with many instances of this quest for justice. For instance, Ragnar Danneskjöld, the philosopher turned "pirate," as described by Mimi Reisel Gladstein (2000,70) "turns the contemporary understanding of the Robin Hood myth on its head. Rather than steal from the rich to give to the poor, he steals from those he considers to be undeserving and gives to the deserving . . ." Like an avenging angel, Ragnar acts Trickster-like, completing "the picture of how men of ability and integrity must respond to a world of moochers and looters."

In *Atlas Shrugged*, Francisco d'Anconia fills the Trickster role in the fashion of Hermes, as a messenger of the gods.[2] As a messenger of Zeus, Hermes ferried the souls of the dead to the underworld, and sometimes brought them back. But unlike the aloof Zeus, Hermes was the closest of the Greek gods to mankind. The parallel with Francisco is striking. Whereas John Galt, like Zeus, is forever elusive, Francisco walks among the people, acting in his mission to bridge the gulf between Galt's Gulch (Rand's heaven) and the rest of the world. How Francisco achieves his goal is very much in the vein of the Trickster. He poses as a worthless playboy, bent on destroying his copper mines, his clients, and his reputation, when in reality he is a productive creator and a Prime Mover. As the messenger for Galt,

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he guides the souls of Dagny Taggart, Hank Rearden, and other Prime Movers from the "underworld" of New York to the "paradise" of Atlantis, where they can truly live and flourish.

Also like Hermes, Francisco demonstrates his cleverness from a very early age. Gladstein says that he "begins in his youth to develop his considerable natural abilities" (68). Francisco also blurs the distinction between the conception of high and low culture. When an elder reproaches him for exploring an auto scrap yard, insisting that he should be in a library studying the culture of the world, Francisco responds, "what do you think I'm doing?" (Rand [1957] 1992, 93). He points out the false cultural distinction, aiming for the integration of diverse fields that Rand develops in *Atlas* and in the general framework of Objectivism.

Rearden is a good example of the type of person that the Trickster, Francisco, comes to ferry. Gladstein (2000, 67) observes that Rearden "is an industrialist of tremendous ability," even though "he is an unhappy man who doesn't know why he is unhappy." Gladstein also agrees with Judith Wilt's description of Rearden as a bit schizophrenic, a female icon of sorts, who "makes the classic 'female' adjustment: he accepts the world's definition of his work life, love and productivity as guilt and his withdrawal of pure love from his family as shame" (Wilt [1978] 1999, 61). Francisco thus appears to Rearden to teach him the differences between love and duty, money and unearned wealth.

However, Francisco is not the only Trickster character in the novel. Rand's central protagonist and "ideal man," John Galt, may be the most important symbol of the Objectivist Trickster. Like Hermes, who could move about invisibly, Galt doesn't appear in the story until about half way through the novel. He appears as a railroad worker, hiding his true genius, even as the myths that have spread about him depict him as something of an icon. Though he is the creator of "the motor of the world," he is also "the great destroyer" who steals the minds of the world. Galt encapsulates what Radin ([1956] 1972, xxiii) sees as quintessentially Trickster: he is "at one and the same time creator and destroyer, giver and negator." And like the Trickster, he is responsible for the deteriorating state of the

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world. Moreover, by removing all the capable people from a world that exploits them, Galt creates a profoundly paradoxical situation: his actions undermine the efforts of Dagny Taggart, the woman he loves, as she struggles to keep her railroad afloat, even as they ultimately deliver her into his "utopia of greed."

It must be emphasized that the Trickster is also supremely "selfish," in a Randian sense, insofar as he "is at his best in the service of the central aspect of the personality, the archetype Jung called the Self" (Combs and Holland 1990, 121). He is "associated with the growth process termed *individuation*. Such growth occurs when the entire psyche comes under the governing influence of the Self. . . . Individuation . . . means to find one's uniqueness, to fully become an individual. . . . There must be intercession by the highest source of purpose within the individual, the archetypal Self" (121).

This captures one of the most important motifs in Rand's novels. But her characters achieve this individuation by embracing different Trickster archetypes. If Francisco resembles the Hermes archetype, then Galt is the embodiment of the Promethean archetype. Rand even uses this characterization in the novel. Francisco says of Galt that he is "the Prometheus who changed his mind. . . . After centuries of being torn by vultures in payment for having brought to men the fire of the gods, he broke his chains and he withdrew his fire—until the day when men withdraw their vultures" (Rand [1957] 1992, 480).

There isn't any evidence to suggest that Rand had explicit knowledge of the Trickster archetype, at least not from any study of Native American, Japanese, or African mythology. But she widely referred to ancient Greek culture; it is most likely that Rand's implicit Trickster imagery originates in her engagement with Greek mythology.[3] And she drew upon the Promethean archetype quite often. Equality 7-2521, the hero of *Anthem*, adopts "Prometheus" as his own name. And the unnamed "saint of the pyre" is a metaphoric stand-in for Prometheus himself (Rand [1961] 1995, 51).

Howard Roark epitomizes the Promethean archetype. In *The Fountainhead*, Roark uses Peter Keating to bring to fruition his designs for Cortlandt Homes because the city had been closed to his work through the efforts of Ellsworth Toohey. It could be said that

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Roark's demolition of Cortlandt Homes is his responsibility because he agreed to build it in a deceitful manner, and he should have known that Keating would not have been strong enough to protect its architectural integrity. The Trickster, after all, sometimes creates the problem that he is recruited to solve; in this case, therefore, Roark qua Trickster, must destroy Cortlandt Homes.[4]

The Sacred and the Profane

Tricksters are about the sacred and the profane. They destroy the sanctimonious with flatulence and excrement. Hyde (1998, 177) says: "What tricksters like to do is erase or violate that line between the dirty and the clean. As a rule, trickster takes a god who lives on high and debases him with earthly dirt, or appears to debase him, for in fact the usual consequence of this dirtying is the god's eventual renewal." In fact, Tricksters are said to have a great attraction to dirt—literally. Hyde describes dirt as "matter out of place." He explains: "Egg on my plate is breakfast, but egg on my face is dirt; shoes in the closet are tidy, but shoes on my table are a mess; the farmer in Iowa washes the manure from his hands, the brahmin in Mysore washes with it. . . . Dirt is the anomalous, not just what is out of place, but what has no place at all when we are done making sense of the world" (176).

Rand's heroes work with and transform the earth. Roark professes his "love [of] this earth. That's all I love. I don't like the shape of things on this earth. I want to change them" (Rand [1943] 1993, 49).[5] In one episode, while working for architect John Erik Snyte, Roark defiles the pristine designs meant for Austin Heller in a fit of creativity. "He seized the sketch, his hand flashed forward and a pencil ripped across the drawing, slashing raw black lines over the untouchable watercolor. . . . Roark's hand went on razing walls, splitting, rebuilding in furious strokes . . . in an ordered pattern of black streaks" (127).

Dirt, of course, has a wider, less literal, connotation. In her novels, Rand constantly points out the flaws, the "dirt," in her villains. Through the actions of her protagonists, a context is created

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in which the true nature of the villains is revealed. And by consequence, the villains' downfall is assured.

This struggle between heroes and villains is a struggle between good and evil. In folklore, however, the Trickster archetype is often mistaken or confused with the Devil, thus blurring the distinction between good and evil. This blurring of boundaries creates a potential paradox: If Roark is a Trickster, what is Toohey, Rand's arch-villain? Merrill (1991, 51) describes Toohey as "the impossible villain." He compares Toohey, this "perfect personification of evil," to Goethe's Mephistopheles.

But Roark is not stopped by the devil-like Toohey. His triumph over Toohey challenges the moral boundaries of a society, its notions of right and wrong, its false dualities of art and commerce, selfishness and love. How does this development play out? The answer may be derived from an essential insight: whereas the Devil is *immoral*, the Trickster is *amoral*.

In his book, *Prometheus: Archetypal Image of Human Existence*, Kerenyi (1963, 3) describes the duality of Prometheus as both Devil and Messiah:

> Among all the gods in Greece, it is Prometheus who stands in the most remarkable relation to mankind. He presents a striking resemblance and a striking contrast to the Christian savior. More than any other Greek god, he intercedes for mankind, makes common cause with men. Therein lies the resemblance. But Christ suffered human existence as a man. His whole mission depended on his close bond with mankind. The paradox in his case is not that he, a man, made common cause with mankind. The paradox is the faith of the Christians who believe him to be a god. Prometheus never appeared as a man. He is a mythological being and was never anything else; it is not as though a mythology had formed around him later on. His divinity is self-evident. In his case, the paradox begins when he defends the cause of humanity, when he, a god, suffers injustice, torment, and humiliation—the hallmarks of human existence.

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Kerenyi suggests that Prometheus is similar to Christ, rather than the Devil. In many ways, however, Prometheus is a "safe" version of the Devil; he is not labeled a devil, but a titan of Greek mythology.[6] Prometheus sympathizes with mankind, steals fire from the gods and teaches man how to live, against the will of Zeus. He is punished by being bound to a rock while an eagle eats his liver. And men are duly punished too; though they now have fire, light, and wisdom, Zeus provides them with a "gift" to compliment their newfound wonders, as all the evils in the world are released from Pandora's box.[7]

In a sense, the key Trickster element in Prometheus is that he is both thief and savior; he is a thief from the perspective of the gods, and a savior from the human vantage point. The comparison to the Biblical story of the Garden of Eden is striking. The Serpent tempts Eve to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The Serpent promises Eve that by eating of this tree, "your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3: 5). Eve's choice to eat of the Tree and to share the fruit with Adam unwittingly releases a veritable Pandora's box of suffering and hardship.[8] Cast out of Paradise, where "ignorance is bliss," human beings are now separated from God; sin itself means separation.

In the Prometheus myth and the Biblical story of Genesis, the Greeks and Adam and Eve, respectively, are given both knowledge and misery. But whereas Adam and Eve lived in Paradise, Prometheus tried to show the Greek "savages" how to cope with a harsh reality. In both instances, however, the eyes of ignorant humans are opened by an instigator.

The question, then, is this: Is Prometheus a force for good, a Christ-figure, or an agent of evil? He is neither; he is both. He is a Trickster; he is at the crossroads. This is not unusual. Jung has suggested that Christ and the Devil constitute a "unity" of opposites, with certain interpenetrating characteristics. For just as Lucifer is a lightbringer, so too Jesus proclaims that he is "the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8: 12). In *Man and His Symbols*, Jung (1964) illustrates the dual aspects of Christ, noting his identities as "shepherd" and "sacrificial lamb," as a fish and a "fisher of men." For

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Jung, Christ is a redeemer, who reflects the "perfectly good father." But the light that he reflects casts a shadow, creating a shadow opponent.[9] The very need for a Christ, a Messiah, is illustrative of a Trickster atoning for a situation that he himself has created. God created all, and now he must create a savior—in the Christian case, Jesus—who must set things right.

If we extend Jung's thesis to a consideration of Roark and his arch-nemesis, Toohey, we must ask: If Roark, like Christ, is the reflection of all that is good, is Toohey, like the Devil, his shadow? And do Roark and Toohey require one another, much as the yin requires the yang?

In the New Testament, when Jesus confronts his shadow, Satan, in the desert, he is tempted and challenged. But Jesus resists all temptation, and does not reconcile with Satan. The boundary remains. Roark too is tempted by his shadow, Toohey, to declare what he really thinks of him. When Roark replies, "But I don't think of you," he denies the shadow, and affirms the boundary (Rand [1943] 1993, 389). Here, Roark is the genuine Trickster figure, while Toohey is symbolic of the Devil as pure evil for evil's sake, even if, by Christian standards, Toohey's doctrine of altruism would be considered righteous.[10]

The confrontation of Roark and Toohey is much lengthier in the second draft of *The Fountainhead*, wherein Rand explores the God-Satan parallels explicitly. These passages were later excised from the final draft, but they reveal the profound influence of religious metaphors and analogies on Rand's work.[11] In the second draft's version of the dialogue, Roark asks Toohey: "What am I to you?" Toohey replies that he is Roark's "antithesis." Thus,

> [f]or every pair of antonyms—light and darkness, life and death—"one is the real, the full, the self-sufficient; the other has no actual existence, except by grace of the first, as its denial." The first does not need the second, but the second needs to deny the first. "God does not demand power. He has it. . . . But it is the Devil who must want to rule, in the absolute, the total, the all-inclusive sense—because his reality

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> is the total void." Toohey confesses his metaphysical dependence on Roark: "you don't have to know that I exist. And I—I actually have no meaning without you." He implicitly admits which of them is the self-sufficient God, and which the power-desperate, destructive Devil. And, almost as an afterthought, Toohey identifies their fundamental opposition: "I was merely illustrating the nature of opposites. I intended no personal allusions. Though I could say that you stand—better than anyone I know—for that embodiment of evil, the Ego. While I stand for the ideal of good—Selflessness." (Milgram 2001b, 28; Rand quotes from the second draft of *The Fountainhead*, Ayn Rand Manuscripts, box 21, folder 6, 177–84)

Which is Which and Who is Who?

Because of the apparent parallels between the Trickster and the Devil, it has been thought that the Trickster is simply another version of the Devil. Hyde (1998, 10) relates that

> in Nigeria . . . ethnographers found their informant telling tales of the Yoruba trickster Eshu as being about "the devil," for this is what the missionaries had taught them to do . . . the same thing happened in neighboring Dahomy, where Christians were sure they found Satan disguised as the trickster Legba, and recast the story of Adam and Eve with Legba hired locally to play the serpent.

The Norse Trickster Loki is also depicted as the Devil, and Prometheus, the bringer of fire to mankind, is often paralleled to Lucifer, whose name means "lightbringer." Anton LaVey, the author of *The Satanic Bible* (1969), includes Loki, Prometheus, and Lucifer in his list of "infernal names" (58). But Hyde (1998, 10) challenges this conception:

> The devil and the trickster are not one and the same thing,

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> though they have been regularly confused. Those who confuse the two do so because they have failed to perceive the Trickster's great ambivalence. The Devil is an agent of evil, but the Trickster is *a*moral, not *im*moral. He embodies and enacts the large portion of our experience where good and evil are helplessly intertwined. He represents the paradoxical category of sacred amorality.

Radin ([1956] 1972, xxiii) confirms that the Trickster "knows neither good nor evil, yet he is responsible for both. He possesses no values, moral or social . . . yet through his actions all values come into being." Combs and Holland (1990, 134) also stress the "amorality" of the Trickster, whose "delight [it is] to shatter our boundaries, borders, and frames, stripping us of our protective coloration and baring us helplessly to something new."

This view of the Trickster as amoral seems to blur the parallels between the Trickster archetype and the characters of Objectivist lore. It is easy to see Toohey as a Devil, but how can we view Roark as an amoral Trickster? Rand's characters certainly do have morals and values. Yet, on closer inspection, the Trickster parallels remain strong. The Devil has been assigned a role by the Christian moral majority, which goes against the prevailing ethical code. He is thus seen as immoral. But Satanists, like LaVey, who reject the morality of Christianity, recast the Devil through a Nietzschean "transvaluation of values." This same dynamic is at work in Rand's ethical perspective. As Sciabarra (1998, 137) explains, Rand, like Nietzsche,

> was engaged in a vast deconstruction of conventional morality, probing its inner essence, making transparent the appearance of its "'high' words [as] a monstrous lie" . . . In Rand's project, the revelation of hypocrisy at the foundation of traditional ethics was intended to usurp the very structure of these ethics, laying the groundwork for a moral revolution of her own making. . . . Rand absorbed Nietzsche's transvaluation of values; she highlighted "the irrational paradox of altruism . . . the process by which qualities

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> (virtues) desirable in fact become undesirable in [conventional] morality." Like Nietzsche, she viewed "altruism as a weapon of exploitation." She retained even the form of his distinction between "master" and "slave" morality. In *Atlas Shrugged*, she drew an analogous distinction between the Morality of Life and the Morality of Death . . . Just as the values of Nietzsche's slave morality become the vices of his master morality, so too, for Rand, in the Morality of Death, "all [man's] virtues are called vices, all his vices are called virtues . . ."[12]

Rand sought to challenge two thousand years of Christianity. Like the classic Trickster, she poses this challenge in her fictional work, by use of the paradox. Merrill (1991) points out that "Rand's conscious and explicit commitment to logical consistency is a most obvious trait. . . . Repeatedly she challenges the reader with contradictions to be resolved" (17). In addition, Merrill notes that a desire to *épater les bourgeois* is at work, in which "Rand takes an almost childish delight in defying the conventions and shocking the reader" (18).[13]

Rand's goal was partly to counter altruism, especially Christian altruism. She held as virtues that which the Church called sins. This inversion was not unique to Rand—or Nietzsche; some of their Romantic predecessors began this "sustained ironic reversal," as M. H. Abrams has characterized it, by embracing the iconic imagery of the Devil as a slandered and misrepresented hero, rather than as a representation of deception and evil, as Christians would have it. Reviled by Christians as the Prince of Lies and the Great Deceiver, Lucifer was viewed as the Lightbringer, the Morningstar.

The notion of Lucifer as heroic grew out of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Milton, writing from a conservative-religious perspective, presents Lucifer as the villain of the twelve-book poem. Even though Lucifer gains a kind of heroic stature in leading a revolt against God, Milton sought to "justify the ways of God to men" (in Abrams [1962] 1968, 596). In the Romantic literary period, however, Lucifer was reinterpreted by such poets as William Blake and Percy Bysshe Shelley, as the hero of the piece.[14] Lucifer's statement, "Better

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to reign in hell, than serve in heav'n" (Milton 1993, 16; Book 1, line 261), became an inspiration for those who embraced the rebellion against authority.

In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1793), for example, Blake argued that Milton "was a true Poet and of the Devil's party without knowing it" (493). Abrams ([1962] 1968, 1234–35) argues that Blake engages in a "transvaluation of standard criteria":

> Blake accepted the terminology of middle-class Christian morality ("what the religious call Good & Evil"), but reverses its values. In this conventional use Evil, which is manifested by the class of beings called Devils and which consigns a man to the orthodox Hell, is everything associated with the body and its desires and consists essentially of energy, abundance, act, freedom. And conventional Good, which is manifested by Angels and guarantees its adherents a place in the orthodox Heaven, is associated with the Soul (regarded as entirely separate from the body) and consists of the contrary qualities of reason, restraint, passivity, and prohibition. Blandly adopting this current nomenclature, Blake elects to assume the diabolic persona—what he calls "the voice of the Devil"—and to utter "Proverbs of Hell."

Abrams adds that this is only a "first stage" in Blake's "transvaluation" of "simultaneous opposites," for, ultimately, he seeks "a more inclusive point of view, . . . a 'marriage' of the contrary extremes of desire and restraint, energy and reason, . . . 'the Prolific' and 'the Devouring'" (1235).

Shelley, who was an atheist, proclaimed himself a follower of "the sacred Milton" in the preface to his lyrical four-act drama, *Prometheus Unbound* (Shelley 1968, 62). In a sense, for Shelley, Milton's work entails a kind of transvaluation, in which the Devil, traditionally evil, embodies the good, while God, traditionally good, embodies the evil. Thus, Milton's poem

> contains within itself a philosophical refutation of that

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> system of which . . . it has been a chief popular support. Nothing can exceed the energy and magnificence of the character of Satan as expressed in *Paradise Lost.* It is a mistake to suppose that he could ever have been intended for the popular personification of evil. Implacable hate, patient cunning, and a sleepless refinement of device to inflict the extremest anguish on an enemy, these things are evil; and although venial in a slave are not to be forgiven in a tyrant; although redeemed by much that ennobles his defeat in one subdued, are marked by all that dishonours his conquest in the victor. Milton's Devil as a moral being is as far superior to his God as one who perseveres in some purpose which he has conceived to be excellent in spite of adversity and torture, is to one who in the cold security of undoubted triumph inflicts the most horrible revenge upon his enemy, not from any mistaken notion of inducing him to repent of a perseverance in enmity, but with the alleged design of exasperating him to deserve new torments. Milton has so far violated the popular creed (if this shall be judged to be a violation) as to have alleged no superiority of moral virtue to his God over his Devil. (*A Defence of Poetry* in Shelley 1977, 498)

Though Rand wrote little about the Romantic poets, she saw herself as a "Romantic Realist," a successor to the Romantic tradition (Rand 1975b, 167). And though Rand never used the Devil as an icon, his Romantic portrait as a rebel against tyranny could make him a virtual hero by Objectivist standards.[15]

Trickster Incarnate

The demonization of Ayn Rand by her critics provides us with an opportunity to view her as a real-life Trickster. Rand challenges the notion that an atheist is amoral or immoral. She blurs the conventional distinctions between right and wrong, and in the process transcends them, not by claiming that she was beyond good and evil,

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but by changing the criteria of morality.

Though Rand confronted the boundaries inherent in conventional distinctions, she, like the Trickster, created a few of her own. Rand ([1945] 1982, 4) told her readers that it was the content of her mind that was significant, "not the accidental details of [her] life. . . . The specific events of my private life are of no importance whatever," she insisted. As Radin ([1956] 1972, xxiv) argues, however, we cannot make the Trickster "intelligible and meaningful" without grasping her in the "specific cultural environments and . . . historical settings" in which she appears. Therefore, examining Rand through her personal and cultural background makes her Trickster status even more apparent.

Born in the early twentieth century, Alissa Zinovievna Rosenbaum rejected the clash between communism and religion that was prevalent in her native Russia. Whereas materialists and religionists saw a clear boundary between their world-views, the young Rosenbaum sought to link the two as variations on a theme. Both the State and the Church were an affront to the individual; the Communists merely wished to replace God with the State. Educated under the Soviets, Rosenbaum escaped to America—the country whose founding ideals she exalted. Having changed her name to Ayn Rand, she published her first novel, *We the Living*, during America's "Red Decade," when the intellectuals had fully embraced the spirit of collectivism, extolling the virtues of the Soviet experiment. In successive works, Rand disrupted the dichotomies and contradictions at work in American society. Like the Trickster, she pointed out the flaws of convention, while moving toward a transcendence of such false dualities as mind and body, theory and practice, morality and prudence, reason and emotion.[16]

Viewing Rand as a Trickster, however, has immediate problems. Most Tricksters are male, but Rand was a woman in the male-dominated world of philosophy. Hyde (1998) observes that the Trickster is typically "assigned to the sex that does not give birth" (8). Other writers, such as anthropologist Victor Turner, suggest that Tricksters are sometimes "androgynous" or of "indeterminate sexuality." Turner argues that "[m]ost tricksters have an uncertain

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sexual status: on various mythical occasions Loki and Wakdjunkaga transformed themselves into women, while Hermes was often represented in statuary as a hermaphrodite." Hyde counters, however, that "the classical hermaphrodite is born of the union of Hermes and Aphrodite; to say the figure represents Hermes is an insult to Aphrodite." He observes further that the Native American Trickster, Wakdjunkaga "disguises himself as a woman, marries the son of a chief, and bears three sons. Loki once transformed himself into a mare in heat so as to distract the stallion that was helping to build the wall around Asgard." But even in such cases, Tricksters synthesize male and female characteristics and eventually revert to the primarily male archetype. In the Native American case, Wakdjunkaga loses his disguise and wonders why he has done "'all this? It is about time that I went back to the woman to whom I am really married,'" he says (335–36).

As a woman novelist and philosopher, it might appear that Rand, the real-life Trickster, contradicts the almost exclusively male Trickster archetype. But it might be said that a certain synthesis of male and female characteristics can be detected in Rand the person. She proudly embraced so-called "masculine" virtues of rationality and productiveness, leading some feminists, such as Lynda Glennon, to view her as an "instrumentalist" male-centric thinker.[17] Rand's biographer, Barbara Branden observes also that the economist Henry Hazlitt had once reported that Ludwig von Mises, the Austrian theorist, called Rand "'the most courageous man in America.' 'Did he say *man*?' asked Ayn. 'Yes,' he replied. Ayn was delighted" (Branden 1986, 189).

Rand was never a mother, and, like her, all of her major characters embody a similar "non-procreative creativity," as Hyde (1998) puts it. Rand boldly proclaimed the union of mind and body, of the sensual and the spiritual. Like the Trickster, who "moves between heaven and earth" and "is very concerned with sensual, earthly affairs," she often portrays in her novels, what Hyde calls, a "hyper-active sexuality [that] . . . never results in any offspring . . ." When Hyde tells us that such sexual intensity is not mere hedonism, and that the Trickster's sensuality is integrated to his spiritual

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concerns, he might as well be describing a central motif of the Randian canon. As Hyde writes: "Their appetites drive their wanderings . . . in spite of all this disruptive behavior, tricksters are regularly honored as the creators of culture. They are imagined not only to have stolen certain goods from heaven and given them to the race but to have gone and shaped this world so as to make it a hospitable place for human life" (8).

And this is precisely what is entailed in Rand's world-view: the creation of a new and radically different culture. As a purveyor of a "new concept of egoism," Rand proposes revolutionary cultural values. But as Radin ([1956] 1972, 126) reminds us, the Trickster does not simply bring culture to mankind as a "primary purpose. It is incidental to [her] desire to express and develop [herself]. [She] cannot attain development in a void . . ." Rand echoes this sentiment in *The Fountainhead*, when Roark testifies that he does not build in order to have clients; he has clients in order to build. Roark tells Peter Keating:

> I'm never concerned with my clients, only with their architectural requirements. . . . Bricks and steel are not my motive. Neither are the clients. Both are only the means of my work. Peter, before you can do things for people, you must be the kind of man who can get things done. But to get things done, you must love the doing, not the secondary consequences. The work, not the people. Your own action, not any possible object of your charity. I'll be glad if people who need it find a better manner of living in a house I designed. But that's not the motive of my work. Nor my reason. Nor my reward. . . . The only thing that matters, my goal, my reward, my beginning, my end is the work itself. My work done my way. . . . A private, personal, selfish, egotistical motivation. That's the only way I function. That's all I am. (Rand [1943] 1994, 579–81)

Like the hero of her creation, Rand the woman insists that the goal of her writing is "*not* the philosophical enlightenment of my readers,

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it is *not* the beneficial influence which my novels may have on people, it is *not* the fact that my novels may help a reader's intellectual development. All these matters are important, but they are secondary considerations, they are merely consequences and effects, not causes or prime movers" (1975b, 162). For Rand, the projection of ideal men, such as Roark, is the "motive and purpose" of her writing (162).

This tie between Rand and her protagonists is crucially significant. Having created so many Trickster characters in her fiction, she was ripe for becoming that which she created—and she invited the comparison. She had publicly proclaimed that her "personal life . . . [was] a postscript to my novels; it consists of the sentence: '*And I mean it.*' I have always lived by the philosophy I present in my books —and it has worked for me, as it works for my characters. The concretes differ, the abstractions are the same" ("About the Author," in Rand [1957] 1992).

When the Trickster Aspires to Godhood

Rand was at her best when she focused on her work, challenging from the outside conventional morals and traditions. As Hyde (1998, 13) puts it, this is where the Trickster belongs, on "the periphery, not [in] the center." As Rand moved toward the center, to lead a movement, her individualist message was slowly replaced by dogma and authority.[18] Hyde tells us a cautionary tale from Indian mythology:

> "I will be the sun god," declared Coyote, and the people allowed him to try. But he watched everything that the people did. Seeing people in secret love, he yelled down to them, much to their embarrassment. He told on those who were in hiding. The people were glad when that day was over. They lost no time taking Coyote from the sun lodge. (153)

And so, as Rand was thrust into the role of sun goddess, so to speak, she became like Coyote, who sought to transcend his Trickster role

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by embracing deification. On the testimony of some of her closest associates, she became intolerant and oppressive, while alienating her supporters.

If the Trickster is a symbol for cleverness, he is also a symbol for the fool who finds himself in humiliating situations, a victim of his own pride. And though Rand's archetypes are never presented as humiliated fools, there are too many testimonials to Rand's character that portray her as a casualty of her own hubris.[19] The problem of the Trickster as god is one that entails a lack of shame. In discussing "Speechless Shame and Shameless Speech," Hyde (1998, 157) describes shame as "a gift from the gods to protect reckless mortals from their own foolishness." This is a gift that Tricksters lack.

Rand (1964, 72) inverted the Christian edict of "judge not, lest not ye be judged" to "judge, and be prepared to be judged." And for human beings, this is sound advice for survival. We are reminded, however, that Tricksters sometimes need to atone for a situation that they themselves created. Rand created a boundary between herself and her followers, the very "sycophants" whom Random House publisher Bennett Cerf blamed for Rand's autocratic personality. Cerf (1977, 251) always marveled at Rand's intelligence and admitted that she was clever at argumentation: "she makes a fool out of you" —a sure hallmark of Rand's Trickster ways. But Cerf believed that Rand's followers were so convinced of her infallibility that Rand herself began to believe it.

A series of personal purges and "breaks" with formerly close associates came to a climax in the events surrounding Rand's extramarital affair with her chief protege, psychologist Nathaniel Branden. With the end of that affair and their very public professional relationship, Rand judged Branden for the very thing she was guilty of, but she did not let herself be judged. In her public statement with regard to the break, Rand (1968) never named the actual reasons for her disassociation from either Nathaniel Branden or Barbara Branden. Barbara Branden (1986, 354) explains:

> In retrospect, it is evident why Ayn believed it legitimate to write the article she chose to write—to manufacture reasons

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> for her actions and refuse to name the real source. For many years, she had made her position clear: honesty was a high and noble virtue, dishonesty was a moral vice—except when one was put in a position, not of one's own making but *through the immorality of another*, where truth would be inimical to one's best interests. We do not owe truth to a robber who demands to know where the jewelry is hidden, she often said: we may morally tell him there *is* no jewelry. That appeared to be how she had interpreted her situation with Nathaniel: that he, not she, had brought her to the point where the truth would expose her to public humiliation; he had made it necessary for her to fight by any means possible for her life, for her reputation, for her work. It was not she who should pay the price of his deceit. Ayn, finally enslaved by the self-image she had created, unable to storm its impregnable barriers, was never to ask herself if she had helped to create the trap with no exits in which she found herself.

Like the Trickster, Rand was embroiled in deception and contradictions partially of her own making, needing to atone for a situation that she herself "had helped to create." But Rand was not blessed with "the gift of shame," and this brought down any self-aspiration to godhood.[20]

Still, there may be a positive side to all this. Hyde (1998, 154) relates an Asian Trickster story on shame:

> . . . it's the same with old monkey in China. We know that Tripitaka, the venerable Buddhist monk who takes monkey with him on "the journey to the west" is a good man, because he's regularly "struck dumb by his shame." That's as it should be; shame should steal your voice. Even if you want to speak, shame should bind your tongue. No such paralysis strikes monkey's loose and apish tongue. In fact, his constant fluency in situations that would silence more sensitive creatures is an ironic boon to Tripitaka on his

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> journey, for it is hard to travel in this fallen world if you lose the power of speech every time evil meets you on the path. Tripitaka is so kindly that when monsters mask themselves as virtuous men he never sees through the disguise. "Master, please put away your compassion just for today!," Monkey begs. "When we have crossed this mountain, you can be compassionate then." Monkey, never blinded by compassion, and certainly never "struck dumb," keeps the pilgrims smartly moving along.

We are often confronted with uneasy choices if we are to survive. And our scruples may prevent us from making such choices. But one can starve on principles; so in order to survive, it is the Trickster who convinces us to make the choices. And Rand as a Trickster did precisely that. With her "shameless tongue," she kept us moving past the altruist and collectivist "monsters" who posed as virtuous. That same "shameless tongue" was used against her own followers in a series of excommunications that undermined any fledgling movement in her name. Kerenyi (in Radin [1956] 1972, 206) advises that "[t]he so-called civilized man . . . never suspects that his own hidden and apparently harmless shadow has qualities whose dangerousness exceeds his wildest dreams. As soon as people get together in masses and submerge the individual, the shadow as mobilized, and, as history shows, may even be personified and incarnated."

But instead of thinking about the "Ayn Rand who might have been," as Jeff Walker (1999, 342) does, it may be necessary to accept Ayn Rand as a "package deal," a lightbringer who simultaneously casts a shadow. The future of Rand's legacy will depend on those who accept the reality of the shadows, while moving into the light.

Whither Trickster?: The Future of Objectivism

The portrait of Rand as a Trickster becoming a god gives us pause as we analyze the backlash against her, exemplified by those who condemn her as the leader of a cult. As the details of Rand's earthly dirt are made apparent, her humanity knocks her off the godly

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pedestal on which her sycophants have placed her. But she can be brought back to us—and we to her—if she is resurrected in the role of Trickster. This will enable us to separate the idea from the thinker, the message from the messenger.

Hyde (1998, 9) remarks that "the arts of hunting, the arts of cooking meat—such things belong to the beginnings of time, when trickster was first involved in shaping this world. But he has not left the scene. Trickster the culture hero is always present; his seemingly asocial actions continue to keep our world lively and give it the flexibility to endure." When Hyde writes the following, it sounds like a summary of Rand's life-work:

> I not only want to describe the imagination figured in the trickster myth, . . . I want to argue a paradox that the myth asserts: that the origins, liveliness, and durability of cultures require that there be a space for figures whose function is to uncover and disrupt the very things that cultures are based on. I hope to give some sense of how this can be, how social life can depend on treating antisocial characters as part of the sacred. (9)

This is crucial to our understanding of Objectivism, its past and its future. The paradox here is that some of Rand's actions conflicted with her philosophy. Hyde remarks that "[i]n one Native American story, the Great Spirit speaks to Coyote about the coming of human beings. 'The New People will not know anything when they come, not how to dress, how to sing, how to shoot an arrow. You will show them how to do all those things'" (8–9). Rand's failings mark a "space" for the possible appearance of new Tricksters, who will move Objectivism beyond its residual dogmatism.

Or will they?

Notes

1. Ironically, even the Communists in the story engage in Trickster practices, betraying their own proletarian values; witness Comrade Sonia, who, when she is pregnant, demands the very bourgeois luxuries she formerly condemned. The truth is, however, that those who function in the political sphere, like Comrade Sonia,

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are rarely if ever genuine Tricksters. Hyde remarks: "If trickster were ever to get into power, he would stop being trickster. The deceitful politician is a crook, not a culture hero" (Hyde 1998, 13).

2. Edith Hamilton ([1942] 1989, 34) mentions that Hermes is also a god of commerce, which fits well with the Francisco parallel. In fact, Tricksters are often found "in the marketplace," that is, as commercial actors, where, as Combs and Holland (1990, 93) put it, they illustrate a "role in connecting the known with the unknown across [geographic and cultural] borders." Hyde (1998) addresses this idea of the Trickster in commerce throughout his book. Given Rand's celebration of capitalism and trade, this connection between the market and the Trickster is ripe for analysis among scholars in the history of economic thought.

3. On the importance of the Trickster in Greek mythology, see Kerenyi's afterword in Radin [1956] 1972.

4. The relationship between Roark and Keating illustrates many key Trickster characteristics. For example, when Keating reproaches Roark for being too intense, wondering if Roark ever gets "tired of the heroic," Roark asks: "What's heroic about me?" An exasperated Keating replies: "Nothing. Everything. I don't know. It's not what you do. It's what you make people feel around you" (Rand [1943] 1993, 89). This shifting between "nothing" and "everything" is typical of the ways in which Tricksters defy definition and transcend boundaries. That Roark helps Keating throughout his schooling and career provides one other possible Trickster paradox in action. Sciabarra argues: "This aspect of the Roark-Keating relationship raises a host of fascinating psycho-ethical issues about the nature of 'nonsacrificial' assistance. Rand has not resolved this issue: Why would Roark hopefully expect even 'nonsacrificial' assistance to facilitate the emergence of genuine self-sufficiency in Keating, unless Roark had the 'altruistic' expectation that actions which benefit himself will also benefit Keating?" (Sciabarra 1995, 426 n. 7). Rather than being "altruistic," however, Roark's actions ultimately expose Keating as a second-hander. And Roark, who struggles throughout the book, eventually rises to the top of New York City.

5. In this context, it should be noted that Rand herself ridiculed the ecologists, praising technology for raising human life-spans, claiming that "[a]nyone over 30 years of age . . . [should] give a silent 'Thank you' to the nearest, grimiest, sootiest smokestacks [they could] find" (Rand 1975a, 138).

6. This connection between Prometheus and Satan was explored by the Romantic poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley, in his preface to *Prometheus Unbound.* Shelley writes: "The only imaginary being resembling in any degree Prometheus, is Satan; and Prometheus is, in my judgment, a more poetical character than Satan, because, in addition to courage, and majesty, and firm and patient opposition to omnipotent force, he is susceptible of being described as exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandisement, which, in the Hero of [John Milton's] *Paradise Lost,* interfere with the interest. . . . Prometheus is . . . the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the purest and the truest motives to the best and noblest of ends" (Shelley 1968, 61–62). For more on *Paradise Lost,* see below.

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7. This brief retelling of the Prometheus myth does not do full justice to the complexities of the tale. Hyde (1998) discusses the ambiguity of Prometheus as a Trickster icon, noting that Prometheus, like Loki of Norse mythology, suffers more than most Tricksters. In his discussion, Hyde also raises interesting issues concerning the relationship of Prometheus and his brother, Epimetheus. Vernant ([1999] 2001, 58–59) points out that, etymologically, "Prometheus" means "fore thinking" or foresight, whereas Epimetheus means "after thinking" or hindsight.

8. For a discussion of the parallels between Pandora and Eve, see Panofsky 1956.

9. On the issue of the "shadow," see also Eddy 2001, 5, 55.

10. The parallels between Roark and Jesus were not lost on Rand. See, for example, Rand's letter to Sylvia Austin (9 July 1946), wherein she notes the different moral ideals represented by Roark and Jesus, even as she admits "that both . . . are held as embodiments of the perfect man" (Rand 1995, 287). Interestingly, in an earlier draft of *The Fountainhead*, Rand included a whole passage, later cut, in which Roark, standing before a jury of his peers, sings the praises of Jesus. Jesus, like other great figures in human history, "come[s] close to the truth," even as his ideal is inverted. Thus, writes Rand, "Christ proclaimed the untouchable integrity of Man's spirit [stating] the first rights of the Ego. He placed the salvation of one's own soul above all other concerns. But men distorted it into altruism." On the antithetical relationship between Christ and his successors (such as Paul), compare Nietzsche's *Antichrist*, Chapters 39, 40, and 42 in Nietzsche 1976, 612–17. Rand argues, however, that "Nietzsche, who loved Man, fought against altruism—and destroyed his own case by preaching the Will to Power, a second-hander's pursuit" (Ayn Rand Manuscripts, box 20, folder 5, 588–588a, quoted in Milgram 2001a, 18).

Rand also provides a partial itinerary of mankind's martyred, Trickster-like "benefactors":

> Socrates, poisoned by order of the democracy of Athens. Jesus Christ against the majority of [indecipherable] crucified. Joan D'Arc, who was burned at the stake. Galileo, made to renounce his soul. Spinoza, excommunicated. Luther, hounded. Victor Hugo, exiled for twenty years. Richard Wagner, writing musical comedies for a living, denounced by the musicians of his time, hissed, opposed, pronounced unmusical. Tchaikovsky, struggling through years of loneliness without recognition. Nietzsche, dying in an insane asylum, friendless and unheard. Ibsen [indecipherable] his own country. Dostoevsky, facing an execution squad and pardoned to a Siberian prison. The list is endless. (Ayn Rand Manuscripts, box 20, folder 5, 570, quoted in Milgram 2001a, 17)

11. Rand self-consciously appropriates religious symbols and metaphors throughout *The Fountainhead*. Though Roark is an atheist, Toohey observes: "He will tell you that he doesn't believe in God. . . . Don't believe him. He's a profoundly religious man—in his own way. You can see that in his buildings" (Rand [1943] 1993, 317). Rand remarks in her twenty-fifth anniversary introduction to *The Fountainhead*: "Religion's monopoly in the field of ethics has made it extremely difficult to

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communicate the emotional meaning and connotations of a rational view of life." On these grounds, she recasts such concepts as "exaltation," "worship," "reverence," and the "sacred" (ix). Even the title of a work such as *Anthem* alludes to a religious hymn. As Peikoff states: "Anthem is a religiously toned word . . . [meaning] 'a piece of sacred vocal music, usually with words taken from the Scriptures'" (Peikoff in Rand [1961] 1995, vi).

12. Rand was aware of the "transvaluation of values" that often occurs in a religious context. In an earlier draft of *The Fountainhead*, Rand quotes from the Bible (Matthew 12: 31–32), wherein, as Milgram explains, "Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is the sin committed when one refers to Christ, the epitome of good, as Satan, the epitome of evil" (Milgram 2001b, 24).

13. Merrill roots Rand's "predilection for paradox and her pleasure in surprising and shocking the reader . . . [in] the influence of O. Henry and Oscar Wilde" (1991, 28). On Rand's use of paradox, Cox (1999, 32) notes too that Rand "loved the artist's ability to make life look interesting by changing the point of view from which it is seen. She loved antithesis, irony, paradox, parody, reversal. She loved the freedom that a spiritual outsider has to explore what happens when normal perspectives are inverted."

14. On this point, see also Johnston 1998. Other Romantic writers were inspired by the imagery of the Devil as hero, including Lord Byron who created his own "Byronic hero." For a discussion of Keats's marginalia to Milton's *Paradise Lost*, see Lau 1998. Keats's "Endymion" was greatly inspired by Milton's epic poem.

15. While the Devil is immoral by Christian standards, in other religions he is not. The Chinese consider the dragon to be a symbol of luck, whereas many Eastern philosophies don't even have a devil. They stress the dark forces—necessary to balance the light—that make up the yin and yang of the universe. It should be noted that the yin-yang principle is operative in Native American Trickster stories, and a "key feature of the Native American spiritual outlook," as Eddy (2001, 3) notes. Eddy observes that, for the Native American, "the world must be balanced in terms of light-dark, male-female or sun-moon. This may relate to the Asian origins of Native American peoples, and it seems appropriate to refer to these polarities by the Chinese terms: *yin* (passive) and *yang* (active)."

16. For a discussion of Objectivism as a grand-scale transcendence of false alternatives and dualisms, see Sciabarra 1995.

17. On this point, see Valérie Loiret-Prunet's critical discussion of Glennon's characterization (Loiret-Prunet, "Ayn Rand and Feminist Synthesis: Rereading *We the Living*," in Gladstein and Sciabarra 1999, 84–86). Also see, in the same volume, Thomas Gramstad's essay, "The Female Hero: A Randian-Feminist Synthesis" (333–62), which reclaims the ancient archetype of the Amazon as a postandrogynous ideal for gender individualism.

18. It is possible to view the development of the Objectivist movement through the lens of what Radin calls the "four distinct cycles in the evolution of the hero myth." Joseph L. Henderson ("Ancient Myths and Modern Man," in Jung 1964, 103) draws from Radin's discussion, and argues that the cycle itself is symbolic of the maturation process. Radin had characterized the four cycles as Trickster, Hare, Red Horn, and Twin. "The Trickster cycle corresponds to the earliest and least developed period of life. Trickster is a figure whose physical appetites dominate his behavior;

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he has the mentality of an infant lacking any purpose beyond the gratification of his primary needs; he is cruel, cynical, and unfeeling" The Hare cycle is one in which the hero sacrifices himself for the greater good. The Red Horn cycle centers on the hero's conquest of evil. The Twin cycle completes the conquest. To what extent these cycles are inherent in Rand's literature, her heroic characters, or the history of the Objectivist movement is beyond the scope of the current paper, but something worth investigating.

19. Though it is tempting to think that this hubris was itself Trickster-like—a strategic trap set by Rand as a failsafe to expose the hypocrisy of those who would claim to think for themselves—the evidence of Rand's failings can be found in such works as Branden 1986, Branden 1999, and Walker 1999.

20. Of course, Rand did not believe in godhood, omnipotence or omniscience. But, like a god, Rand was often incredulous when anyone challenged her. Barbara Branden tells us a story of Rand's hospital stay, in her last days. While medicated, she claimed to be able to see the branches of a tree out the window of a nine-story building and wondered how that was possible. When her friend Joan Blumenthal explained that Rand was actually seeing a reflection of her intravenous pole, and that mild hallucinatory experiences were possible under heavy sedation, Rand became incensed that anyone could question her rationality (Branden 1986, 383).

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